

## Children's Speech and Language Therapy Team Attention and Listening

### What is attention and listening?

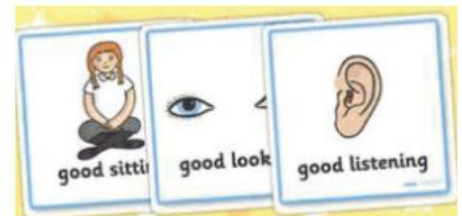
Good listening skills are important for being able to join in with activities and interacting with others.

The development of listening and attention skills is essential to promote a child's understanding and use of language.

### Top Tips

Minimise distractions and reduce background noise

- Call the child's name and make sure they are looking at you before giving an instruction.
- Teach good listening skills by showing the child what is expected of them i.e. 'this is good sitting, listening, looking, waiting'. Praise good examples.
- Use visual support such as cue cards and signs to reinforce your message
- Chunking - break down instructions into chunks the child is able to follow e.g. 'get your coat' (praise the child for listening) 'stand by the door' (point and praise when the instruction so followed)



### Who makes that noise?

Put a set of toy animals or pictures in front of your child.

Talk about the animals and what noises each of them make. Ask your child "which one goes moo?" etc See if they can show you the right animal. If they are not sure, show them yourself.



### Where is that noise?

Use something which makes a noise e.g. a ticking clock or a musical box. Hide the object in the room and encourage your child to listen for the noise and to find the object.

### Listening walk

Go for a 'listening walk' and draw your child's attention to sounds you hear e.g. lorries, aeroplanes, workmen's machines, dog's barking, birds singing.



### Eye spy

Play I spy with initial sounds e.g. 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with B'

Play I spy with rhyming words e.g. 'I spy something that rhymes with bear (chair)'



### Linking actions to sounds

The adult plays one instrument (e.g. a shaker) and the child has to jump then you play a different instrument (e.g. a drum) and the child has to pretend to sleep.



### Visuals for older children

- Use visual checklists and timetable to help children to understand what is expected of them.
- Use timers to help the child know how long they need to focus for.
- Gradually build up the length of time they are required to focus for.

### Useful websites

[www.coventrychildrensslt.co.uk](http://www.coventrychildrensslt.co.uk) - attention pages

[www.hacw.nhs/childrens-speech-and-language-resources](http://www.hacw.nhs/childrens-speech-and-language-resources)

[www.chatterpack.net](http://www.chatterpack.net)

<https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy2/speech-and-language-therapy-toolkit/>

[www.wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/speech-and-language-therapy/support/attention-and-listening](http://www.wiltshirechildrensservices.co.uk/speech-and-language-therapy/support/attention-and-listening)